



# NEWS RELEASE

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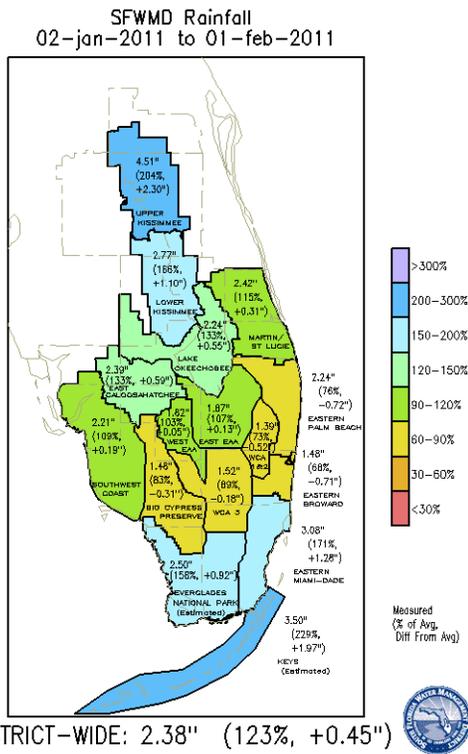
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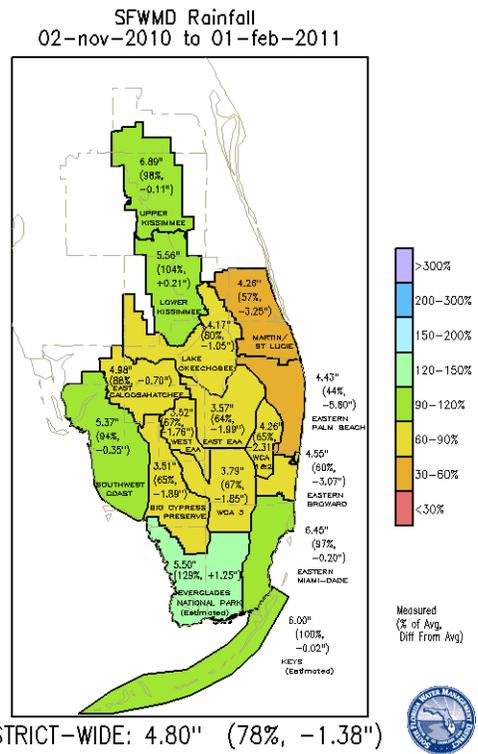
## Wet January Welcome but Water Shortage Concerns Remain

*Long-term forecasts show few signs of relief, making water conservation imperative*

### January 2011 Rainfall



### Dry Season Rainfall



(Click on the maps for larger versions.)

**West Palm Beach, FL** – Although parts of Central and South Florida received above-average rainfall in January, South Florida Water Management District (SFWMMD) meteorologists are reporting that the region remains in a rainfall deficit for the 2010-2011 dry season.

“January’s rainfall was welcome and helpful, but in reality, it did not make up for a deficit accumulated through the last wet season and the beginning of the current dry season,” said Tommy Strowd, SFWMMD Deputy Executive Director of Operations and

Maintenance. “The existing situation and the long-term forecast for continued extreme dry conditions make water conservation efforts essential.”

District-wide rainfall for January registered 2.38 inches for a surplus of 0.45 inches, or 123 percent of the historical average for the month. Nearly half of the month’s rainfall came on January 26, when 1.09 inches fell across the District’s 16-county region. On average, the District receives an inch or more of rain in a single day only six times per year.

January’s rainfall was not evenly distributed throughout the region. For example, the Upper Kissimmee Basin received 4.51 inches of rain, more than twice the historical average for the month. Meanwhile, Eastern Broward County only saw 1.48 inches of rain, just 68 percent of the historical average for that area.

The rainfall did give surface water bodies such as Lake Okeechobee a chance to temporarily stabilize. Groundwater sources in most areas also received a slight boost.

Lake Okeechobee is currently at 12.48 feet above sea level. The lake level is virtually the same as it was 30 days ago, but it remains nearly two feet below its historical average for this time of year.

After a record dry October, rainfall amounts since the official start of the annual dry season have continued to contribute to a rainfall deficit. From the beginning of November through the end of January, the District’s 16-county region has received 4.8 inches of rain, a shortfall of 1.38 inches, or 78 percent of the historical average.

### **Dry Season Forecasts**

In October, the National Weather Service declared an earlier-than-usual start to the dry season along with moderate strength La Niña conditions. La Niña is a weather phenomenon that often generates below average rainfall during our dry season.

While about 12 inches of rain falls on average across the District from November through March, La Niña-influenced dry seasons often produce only about two-thirds of the average during this five-month period.

These dry conditions are following our driest wet season since 1984 in South Florida. An average of 27.31 inches of rain fell between June 1 and October 31, representing 82 percent of the normal amount and a deficit of 6 inches.

### **Water Conservation Remains Key**

The South Florida Water Management District’s Comprehensive Water Conservation Program was approved by the Governing Board in September 2008 to encourage more consistent use of water resources throughout South Florida. Numerous stakeholders worked with the District to define specific regulatory, voluntary and incentive-based programs and in-depth education and marketing plans that will help foster a year-

round conservation ethic. The program includes Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Conservation Measures that took effect in March 2010.

The SFWMD continues to closely monitor water levels and is urging residents and businesses to conserve water and follow landscape irrigation conservation measures in effect. Water-savings tips, information about irrigation limits by area and current conditions are available at [www.sfwmd.gov/waterwatch](http://www.sfwmd.gov/waterwatch).

For more information:

- [SFWMD Weather/Rainfall Data](#)
- [National Weather Service Dry Season Forecast](#)
- [Climate Prediction Center FAQ on La Niña](#)
- [Climate Prediction Center Precipitation Forecast](#)

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### **About the South Florida Water Management District**

*The South Florida Water Management District is a regional, governmental agency that oversees the water resources in the southern half of the state – 16 counties from Orlando to the Keys. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts. The agency mission is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems and water supply. A key initiative is cleanup and restoration of the Everglades.*